



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

March 15, 2004

ICE RETURNS \$2,300 TO ELDERLY SPARKS VICTIM OF TELEMARKETING SCAM

RENO, Nev. – Special agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) today returned \$2,300 to a 78-year-old Sparks woman victimized by telemarketing con artists operating out of Canada.

After presenting Carol Magnies with her check, ICE's Resident Agent-in-Charge in Reno warned the community to be on their guard about these scams, which have bilked people – especially senior citizens in the United States – out of tens of millions of dollars.

The returned money – a fraction of the \$85,000 Carol Magnies believes she lost – was recovered by investigators as part of Project COLT – a multi-agency U.S.-Canada initiative targeting telemarketing fraud. The enforcement effort involves ICE, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the FBI, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

“Most scam victims rarely get all of their money back; a lucky few such as Mrs. Magnies, get part of it returned,” said John Colledge, ICE resident agent-in-charge.

Each year, Canadian-based fraudulent telemarketers generate hundreds of millions of dollars in proceeds from fictitious scams by specifically targeting U.S. citizens. Scammers identify themselves as lawyers, Customs officials, police officers, or lottery company officials, falsely telling victims they have won large sums of money and that the winnings will be released only after payment of service charges, taxes, duties, and other transfer costs.

Since 1999, ICE has worked with U.S. and Canadian law enforcement through Project COLT to identify and dismantle these criminal operations, seize the proceeds, and return approximately \$13 million to victims.

Canadian telemarketing fraud can be reported by contacting ICE at 1-866-DHS-2ICE or PHONEBUSTERS at (888) 495-8501 or www.phonebusters.com.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

www.ice.gov